

National Aeronautics and
Space Administration



Innovation & Opportunity

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Overview of NASA's Technical and Business Assistance (TABA) Program

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Goals of this Presentation



- Provide information on NASA's implementation of TABA at both Phase I and II in the 2021 NASA SBIR/STTR Solicitation
- Describe how small businesses can use the TABA opportunity to
 - Navigate future funding opportunities found within the NASA SBIR/STTR programs
 - Shape and mature your ability to commercialize your innovations in both NASA and non-NASA commercial markets.

What is Technical & Business Assistance (TABA)?



- Enacted by Congress in August of 2018 under the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for FY19; The Act states:
 - **Agencies** may contract with a preferred vendor or multiple vendors to provide TABA services
 - **Small Businesses** may select their own TABA vendor or utilize the services of Agency TABA vendor(s)
 - **Eligible services include:**
 - Product Sales,
 - IP Protections,
 - Market Research,
 - Market Validation,
 - Development of Regulatory Plans and Manufacturing Plans
 - **Allowable amounts and how funds are to be used:**
 - Phase I: up to **\$6,500** per year to be paid to the TABA vendor(s) providing the service
 - Phase II: up to **\$50,000** per project to be paid to the TABA vendor(s) providing the service
 - As part of or in addition to the recipient's award (at agency discretion)
 - **Agencies** are required to report to Congress on how TABA is being utilized within their programs

NASAs TABA Program – Understanding the Opportunity at Phase I



- History suggests that at Phase I, most small businesses are hyper focused on research and development due to short period of performance
- TABA provides an opportunity to stay focused on R&D while utilizing a vendor(s) to help shape your commercialization roadmap in order to:
 1. Strengthen ability to apply for future Phase II and Post Phase II/III opportunities
 2. Put into place strategies to move beyond SBIR/STTR for commercialization in both non-federal and federal markets

NASA's TABA Program – Understanding the Opportunity at Phase I



- Small businesses may:
 - Request TABA funding up to \$6,500 in their Phase I proposal
 - It is not required and it will not be considered as part of the technical evaluation
 - Request must include a description of how the funding will be used
 - Funding would be provided as a supplement to the Phase I award, if selected
 - Choose their own TABA vendor(s)
 - NASA reserves the right to withhold funds requested for TABA until a formal review and approval of the requested vendor(s) is completed.
- NASA **encourages** using Phase I TABA funds for:
 - **Development of a Phase II TABA Needs Assessment**– The goal of the TABA Needs Assessment is to determine and define the types of TABA services and costs the offeror would need if TABA is requested at Phase II and the project is selected. This assessment will be submitted with the Phase II proposal.
 - **Development of a Phase II Commercialization and Business Plan** – Phase II proposals require a commercialization and business plan. So that NASA can evaluate a firm's ability to commercialize the innovation and to provide a level of confidence regarding the firm's future and financial viability.

NASA's TABA Program – Understanding the Opportunity at Phase II



- Small businesses may:
 - Request TABA funding up to \$50,000 in their Phase II proposal
 - It is not required and it will not be considered as part of the technical evaluation
 - Request must include **Phase II TABA Needs Assessment**, with specific requirements laid out in the solicitation
 - Funding would be provided as a supplement to the Phase II award, if selected
 - Choose their own TABA vendor(s)
 - NASA reserves the right to withhold funds requested for TABA until a formal review and approval of the requested vendor(s) is completed.
- **Commercialization and Business Plan**
 - Required as part of the Phase II proposal, per Small Business Administration (SBA) policy
 - Formally reviewed at the same time as the technical evaluation and contributes to the overall recommendation for selection of Phase II awards.
 - Required to adhere to page length requirements and provide information as described in the solicitation.
 - For more information on how NASA reviews Commercialization and Business Plans, see the accompanying presentation titled ***“Why is the Commercialization and Business Plan So Important?”***

10 Frequently Asked Questions



1. What can TABA be used for in Phase I?

Due to limited funding, NASA encourages firms to use these funds to help better position themselves for future funding opportunities where commercialization is a factor such as Phase II and beyond.

2. What can TABA funds be used for at Phase II?

TABA activities should meet commercialization goals for the innovation. Congress identified these activities as Product Sales, IP Protections, Market Research, Market Validation, Development of Regulatory Plans and Manufacturing Plans.

3. Do I have to request TABA? What if I decide not to request TABA? Will this have a negative impact on receiving an award?

Requesting TABA (or not) has no bearing on the proposal selection process. TABA requests will only be reviewed after the proposals are selected based on technical merit at Phase I and technical merit/commercial potential at Phase II.

4. Can I use TABA funds within my company?

Currently the statute requires that any TABA funding must go to a 3rd party service provider and the funding cannot be used internally by the award recipient.

5. Can NASA reject a TABA request?

Yes, NASA can reject the TABA request if there is any indication the selected TABA vendor is not qualified to provide the requested services or if there is evidence of possible Waste, Fraud and Abuse.

10 Frequently Asked Questions



- 6. I submitted a proposal that was selected for funding but did not request TABA; can I request TABA after being notified of an award?**
No, due to budget constraints, NASA has to know as early as possible which small businesses are requesting TABA. All TABA requests must be submitted as part of the Phase I or Phase II proposal.
- 7. I received an award at Phase I but did not request to use TABA and did not receive TABA. Can I ask for it at Phase II?**
Yes, you can request TABA at Phase II; however, you will be required to provide the TABA Needs Assessment and supporting documentation as described by the solicitation in order for NASA to evaluate and approve the TABA funding. Further, not using TABA at Phase I does not negatively impact the decision to approve TABA at Phase II.
- 8. What happens if I need to change or remove a vendor or make changes to the TABA activities after being approved for TABA?**
Any request for changes are subject to the discretion of the Contracting Officer.
- 9. Does my business have to request exactly \$6,500 at Phase I or exactly \$50,000 at Phase II?**
No, requests for TABA may be for any amount not to exceed the limits defined by the statute.
- 10. Is there a list of qualified TABA vendors? Where can I go to find one?**
Unfortunately, there is no Federally approved list of TABA vendors; however, there are online resources focused on the entrepreneurial ecosystem located at [SBIR.gov](https://www.sbir.gov).